



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)
Before the Planning & Development Committee
March 18, 2019**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) respectfully submits comments in **support** of **HB-7277, An Act Concerning the Creation of Land Bank Authorities.**

Land banking authorities have proven instrumental in other states in addressing abandoned buildings and blighted properties in municipalities. By creating a mechanism to leverage limited state and local funding by attracting private investment, land banking authorities provide a powerful tool for enhancing community development in Connecticut's small towns and cities.

In recent years, the Connecticut General Assembly adopted legislation authorizing the creation of land banking authorities to assist municipalities in addressing brownfields issues. Many communities are exploring this option as a much-needed avenue for remediating brownfields issues that private developers are reluctant to take on for a variety of reasons.

It is important to note that the bill does not grant land bank authorities eminent domain powers, which would be a concern.

COST supports HB-7277 which will help strengthen our local economies which contribute to the state's overall economic competitiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.